

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for tracking and disposition of articles, comprising the steps of:
 - a) coding at least one RFID tag with a unique identifier, the identifier being
 - 5 electronically stored in a memory portion of the RFID tag;
 - b) affixing at least one RFID tag to at least one article of merchandise;
 - c) electrically scanning a select RFID tag to obtain the select identifier;
 - d) communicating the select identifier to an inventory record of a point of
 - distribution and incrementing an inventory quantity of the point of distribution;
 - 10 e) electrically scanning the article of merchandise when it is scheduled to be
 - removed from the point of distribution to obtain the select identifier from the RFID tag; and
 - f) removing the select identifier from the inventory record and updating the
 - inventory record at the point of distribution to reflect the removal of the article of merchandise.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the point of distribution is a retail store.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing at least one customer with an account;
 - b) providing the customer with a card to enable the customer to charge purchases
 - 20 against the account, the card further comprising an RFID tag having customer-specific
 - information;
 - c) electrically scanning the customer's merchandise selections at a check-out
 - point of the store to obtain merchandise-specific information;

d) electrically scanning the customer's card to obtain the customer's account information;

e) obtaining personal identification information from the customer for verifying the customer's identity;

5 f) upon verification of the customer's identity, providing the customer with the option of at least one of charging the selections to the customer's account, writing a check, and paying cash; and

g) maintaining a record of customer-specific purchases.

10 4. A method for selling articles in a retail store, comprising the steps of:

a) providing at least one customer with an account;

b) providing the customer with a card to enable the customer to charge purchases against the account, the card further comprising an RFID tag having customer-specific information;

15 c) electrically scanning the customer when the customer is in proximity to a display to obtain the customer's identity and account information from the RFID tag; and

d) providing a customer-specific message to the customer via the display.

20 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the customer-specific message is a personalized greeting.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the customer-specific message is an advertisement corresponding to the customer's past purchasing preferences.

7. A method for tracking and disposition of articles, comprising the steps of:

- a) coding at least one RFID tag with a unique identifier, the identifier being electronically stored in a memory portion of the RFID tag;
- 5 b) affixing at least one RFID tag to at least one article of merchandise;
- c) writing to a select RFID tag to set a status code indicating that the merchandise is unsold;
- d) electrically scanning the select RFID tag to obtain the select identifier;
- e) communicating the select identifier to an inventory record of a store and
- 10 incrementing an inventory quantity of the store;
- f) electrically scanning the article of merchandise when it is sold to obtain the select identifier from the RFID tag;
- g) writing to the select RFID tag to change the status code to indicate that the merchandise has been sold; and
- 15 h) removing the select identifier from the inventory record and decrementing the inventory quantity.

8. A method according to claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

- a) scanning a select RFID tag placed in proximity to an entry and/or exit point of
- 20 the store to obtain the identifier information for the select RFID tag;
- b) comparing the identifier information of the select RFID tag to the inventory record; and

c) generating a perceivable alert signal if the select RFID tag is listed in the inventory record.

9. A method according to claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

- 5 a) scanning a select RFID tag placed in proximity to an entry and/or exit point of the store to obtain the status code information for the select RFID tag; and
- b) generating a perceivable alert signal if the status code indicates that the merchandise affixed to the select RFID tag is unsold.

10 10. A method for tracking and disposition of articles, comprising the steps of:

- a) maintaining a record of the identifiers of RFID tags corresponding to unsold merchandise no longer in a store's inventory record;
- b) electrically scanning the entrances and/or exits to the store for the identifiers of all RFID tags in proximity to the entrances and/or exits;
- 15 c) when a select RFID tag is detected, electrically scanning the RFID tag to obtain the identifier of the tag;
- d) comparing the identifier of the each of the RFID tags to the store's record of unsold merchandise; and
- e) generating an perceivable alert signal if the comparison of any of the
- 20 identifiers of RFID tags match those of unsold merchandise.